

the future of the greatest country in human history for a new century. You can help make the decision the right one.

Thank you, and God bless you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:03 p.m. in the executive terminal at McCarran International Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Nevada State Senator Dina Titus and Nevada State Representative Richard Perkins.

Remarks at the Presidio in San Francisco, California

June 9, 1996

Thank you. Thank you very much. Mr. Chandler, Mr. O'Neill, Mr. Mayor, it's wonderful to be back in San Francisco. Congresswoman Pelosi, Senator Boxer, Senator Feinstein, thank you all for your work on this magnificent project.

You know, I always love coming here, but I especially love coming right here because that's my jogging route right there. [Laughter] Whenever I come to San Francisco I always go down there and run to the Golden Gate Bridge and back, so—and I didn't know exactly where we were going to do this on the Presidio today. I got driven around a little bit, so I got to see some other things that are being done here. When I finally realized that we were going to do this here, I didn't know whether I could actually sit still long enough for the program to unfold, instead of just racing away down there—or, as the case may be, kind of stumbling away down there—toward the bridge.

I want to talk to you today about three little simple ideas that this magnificent place embodies, ideas that are easy to say but have a great deal to do with what kind of country we are and what kind of country we're going to be. When I think of the Presidio, I think of, first and foremost, preserving our incredible natural heritage and our important history. Second, I think about the obligation that the rest of the country has for defense conversion. And thirdly, I think about partnership, the kind of partnership that Jim Harvey's life embodied and that all the things that Mr. Chandler just mentioned represent.

And I want you to think about all that today because in my opinion if this country is going to be what we all want it to be as we move into the next century, we have to keep going until every place that lost a lot because of the end of the cold war—which was a happy and wonderful event—has been fully restored to eco-

nomie prosperity through a real commitment of all the American people to defense conversion. Because we cannot, over the long run, sustain an American economy in this new world unless we have a theory of sustainable development that puts the environment first, not last, and recognizes that we can grow the economy and still preserve our natural heritage. And because we cannot do a lot of what we need to do publicly and still continue to bring the deficit down unless we have partners: business partners, citizen partners, like the young people in the conservation corps, and others who are committed to making the most of our national potential.

It was a brilliant thing that the late Congressman Burton did to provide for the fact that this would become a national park if ever the military should leave. But all over California you see now what can happen if there's a real commitment not to leave the people who fought the cold war for us behind; in Monterey, where Fort Ord is now the California State University at Monterey Bay; in Alameda, where machinists who once built Bradley fighting vehicles are now building electric cars for the 21st century; in Sacramento, where Packard Bell has now hired 3,600 people to assemble personal computers in a former Army depot. And now, of course, this newest of our national parks is showing the rest of our national parks the way to the future.

I have to tell you that—the previous speaker sort of alluded to this, and with greater specificity when Senator Feinstein mentioned the California Desert Protection Act and how we got it and then we very nearly lost it last year. But all of our national parks are at risk. Too many of them have fallen into disrepair. We're working hard to protect them. There were some people who wanted to sell off a lot of them

or privatize them or just let them continue to fall into disrepair. We have resisted that, and I think it's clear now that there is an overwhelming bipartisan consensus in the United States that our national parks are a part of our national treasure; that we have to nourish them, we have to maintain them, we have to improve them. And the last thing in the wide world we need to do is to get rid of any of them. We need to make them better, instead.

But I will say again, in order to do this right, we're going to have to have a lot of support from citizens. The businesses now in this park are thriving, already helping to offset taxpayer costs. Here at Crissy Field, where de Havilland biplanes once touched down, this land will soon become the great common ground for all Americans: historic buildings, wide open areas for kids to play in, restored natural habitat. All the design and planning here have been undertaken through private, nonprofit campaigns. And as we have learned today from their smiling faces and strong voices, much of the work has been done by volunteers who are just as dedicated to this country's future as those who drilled with the 6th Army outside these hangars a generation ago.

The Presidio bill now in the Congress that Congresswoman Pelosi worked so hard for and that Senator Boxer talked about and she and Senator Feinstein are working hard for has virtually no opposition. It calls for a public-private trust to oversee the Presidio's economic future, to preserve the park for future generations, to create a national park that will sustain itself without Government funds. So let me say again, I urge Congress to send me this bill in a clean and straightforward way. We simply cannot continue to have lawmaking paralyzed by the attempts to add to every single good bill that comes along in the Congress some objectionable provision. We need the Presidio bill. We need it now; we need it clean; we need it unhampered.

Let me just say one other thing. I was thinking about my jogging and looking at Senator Cranston, and I remember in my earlier years, back when I had a private life when I was Governor, sometimes Senator Cranston and I would jog in Washington together. I was thinking about all the years that he devoted to public service here in California. When you look at something like the Presidio, when you see at least the natural beauty of it, forgetting about

the buildings, you may think that it has been this way forever and that it would always be this way. But that is far from true. The trees above us, the eucalyptus, the Monterey cypress, believe it or not, were only planted 100 years ago. The Americans who planted them knew that they would never see them full grown. They would never walk under their shade, but they planted them anyway.

We are now being asked to deal with a different sort of planning. Our country is going through a lot of changes. We have proved that we can come to grips with the challenges of the modern economy. The American people have produced almost 10 million jobs in the last 3½ years. And after a long dry spell, a lot of them are being produced here in California. But we cannot forget that what ought to animate us is a vision of what we want this place to be like 20 or 30 or 50 years from now.

I know what I want it to be. I want the Presidio to exist in a country and a State where everybody who is willing to work for it can live up to their dreams; where people have good jobs, yes, but also children have safe streets and good schools; where everybody has access to a clean environment and natural beauty; where our country is still a force for peace and freedom and decency in the world; and where instead of being divided by all these incredible differences that make up the American people, we are united by them and our respect for our diversity and our shared values. It all begins, in a fundamental way, with preserving what God has given us, and there has been no richer gift than the Presidio. I'll do my part, and I want you to keep doing yours.

Thank you, and God bless you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:25 p.m. at Crissy Field. In his remarks, he referred to Robert Chandler, National Park Service project manager, the Presidio; Brian O'Neill, superintendent, Golden Gate National Recreation Area; Mayor Willie Brown of San Francisco, CA; James R. Harvey, former chief executive officer, Transamerica, and former chairman, Presidio Council, Golden Gate National Park Association; former Representative Philip Burton; and former Senator Alan Cranston.